



CITY OF SEATTLE

2006 State Legislative Agenda

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SESSION PRIORITIES - 2006

Transportation

The City of Seattle is committed to maintaining and improving the existing transportation system, investing in a broad range of transportation modes and programs to increase mobility for people and freight. We continue to advocate for critical additional transportation funding, including flexible user-fees, and for a balanced transportation system. Specifically, we support:

- Providing municipalities the ability to increase transportation funding through local revenue options in order to meet local transportation needs.
- Legislation to dissolve the Seattle Popular Monorail Authority and identify an authority to administer the collection and distribution of revenue and assets to pay off existing debts and protect the City's interests and address the City's concerns.
- Amending existing regional transportation enabling legislation to give city elected officials a voting role on the planning committee and governing board, and to allow spending on transit so that an overall funding package, including MVET, can support transit as well as roads.
- Legislation that considers a broader reorganization of regional transportation governance in the Central Puget Sound region. The governance model would incorporate any new regional transportation agency and potentially other regional agencies and could integrate key functions, including transit and transportation planning and implementation, and the authority to raise the necessary revenue.
- Reauthorization of and expanded funding for Commute Trip Reduction and Transportation Demand Management programs.

Housing

The City of Seattle supports efforts to increase the amount of housing, especially affordable housing, as well as levels of home ownership. We support continued work to decrease homelessness throughout Washington State. We support efforts to create incentives and partnerships with businesses and non-profits to encourage the development of new housing units. Specifically, we support:

- Increasing the Homeless Families Services Fund by \$5 million with a long-term goal of \$15 million.
- At a minimum, maintaining the level of funding in the Housing Trust Fund.
- Adding tools, such as Tax Increment Financing and additional real estate excise tax (REET) authority, to assist with affordable housing development and providing local jurisdictions greater flexibility to use local resources for housing and human services.
- Increasing funding for services to prevent people from becoming homeless, particularly comprehensive mental health services and discharge planning from institutions.

Education

The City of Seattle supports efforts at the state level to improve academic achievement in grades K-12. We believe the state should focus on improving early learning education and opportunities for children from birth to kindergarten. We also support state-initiated efforts, such as Washington Learns, which aim to improve educational accountability and financing. Specifically, we support:

- Revisions to the basic education funding formula to better support the standards-based reforms adopted by the legislature in the Education Reform Act of 1993, and to adequately fund the cost of helping students meet the standards.
- Allow school districts greater authority and flexibility in raising local funds for education.
- Funding to school districts for remediation for students not likely to pass the 10th grade WASL.
- Full funding for the cost of special education to school districts.
- Legislation allowing a simple majority to approve school district levies and bonds.
- Funding to increase access to higher education and job training, and to retain and attract high quality educators.
- Approval of the University of Washington's requests for technology funding which provides critical research and promotes economic development in our region and state including:
 - Funding for Phase II of the South Lake Union life sciences campus, and
 - Funding to develop a new nanotechnology and a new information technology program.

Civil Rights

We support efforts to ensure that all people are provided equal rights and protection under Washington State law, including expansion of discrimination laws to include sexual orientation.

We support the repeal of Initiative 200. Alternatively, we support giving local jurisdictions the authority and choice on whether to apply I-200.

SESSION OBJECTIVES - 2006

Administrative Warrants

We support legislation to allow courts to issue civil warrants for conducting housing, property, and health inspections in order to enforce the City's codes. We oppose efforts to diminish current authority to access property for public safety and other business purposes.

B&O Taxes

We support maintaining the municipal B&O tax system, including the ability to collect the revenues locally and implement local definitions. We also support eliminating apportionment to non-taxing jurisdictions and legislative efforts to fix the financial hole for municipalities caused in 2003 by HB 2030.

Capital Budget

We support allocation of \$1 million in state funding to help acquire the area known as Capehart housing in **Discovery Park**. We also support allocation of \$2 million in state capital funding for Phase I of the **Seattle Aquarium** restoration and remodel.

Energy Portfolio Standard

We are committed to working with the Legislature, non-City of Seattle utilities, and stakeholders to develop a statewide framework to increase renewable energy resources and energy efficiency.

Environmental Health

We support measures to remove hazardous material from the waste stream. Specifically, we support the removal of mercury switches from junk vehicles before the vehicles are destroyed, and the creation of a recovery program for these devices. We also support the ban of the manufacturing and sale of products containing polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs). We support efforts to address climate change in our region and state. We support initiatives to encourage the use of cleaner alternative fuels and high efficiency vehicles.

Firearm Safety and Crime Guns

We support measures to ensure firearm safety, particularly around children, and to keep firearms out of the hands of criminals. We support legislation to require trigger locks or lock boxes for guns, and closing the gun show loophole.

Human Services - TANF

We support adequate funding for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) to help ensure family stability and provide the tools recipients need to move off of public assistance and into family wage jobs.

Streamlined Sales Tax

We support implementation of the Streamlined Sales Tax legislation with a mitigation plan to assist cities that are negatively impacted.

Telecommunications and Cable

Participation of local governments in state actions that impact regulation of telecommunications is critical. We oppose any state preemption of authorities historically and traditionally vested in local governments including the management of local public rights-of-way, taxing authority, consumer protection standards, and the ability to provide telecommunication services.

Water Quality

We are committed to providing a safe, reliable, high-quality source of drinking water for our residents, and to promoting water conservation. We support measures ensuring Seattle ratepayers maintain control of their water system and prevent uses that jeopardize the quality and reliability of the system. We support legislation that will prevent Seattle ratepayers from subsidizing ground water and reclaimed water systems.

Weights and Measures Fees

We are seeking authority to set inspection and testing fees, or an increase in the state fees, to support our weights and measures program, which provides consumer and businesses protection from inaccurate measuring devices. We are opposed to any changes that would preempt cities from conducting a weights and measures program.

STATEMENT OF POLICY - 2006

Air Quality and Climate Protection

We believe all levels of government have the ability to implement practices and policies that provide for strong climate protection. We support maintaining and improving existing air quality levels to protect against adverse effects on humans and the environment. We continue to support efforts to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions. We support maintaining current funding for environmental programs related to clean air.

Civil Rights

Every person has the right to live, work, learn, and play free from discrimination. We support the extension of statewide protection to all class groups recognized by the City of Seattle. We support statutory changes to provide gay and lesbian people the legal right to marry. We support practices and local control that allow for equal opportunities for all people in business, education, and job opportunities.

Domestic Violence Protections

We are committed to ending domestic violence for our residents. We support legislative efforts to provide victims of domestic violence with the services, financial assistance, and other resources they need to leave abusive relationships and support their safety. We support legislation that fosters victim safety by providing victims of domestic violence with adequate notice of any efforts to modify or terminate protection orders. We support legislation that strengthens mandatory reporting requirements. Finally, we support efforts to prohibit discrimination against victims of domestic violence.

Economic Development

We support state efforts to provide local governments with financing tools and remove needless regulatory barriers to attract and retain businesses. We also support employer incentives that promote increased job opportunities, wage progression, and retention for workers. We recognize that Washington State under-funds its tourism industry and so we support efforts to provide incentives to enhance our tourism industry. Similarly, we support incentives to attract the film and music industries to Washington and Seattle.

Elections and General Government

We support legislation providing local jurisdictions more flexibility on election issues, which includes allowing a local campaign-matching program for campaign donations in exchange for limits on campaign spending. We believe the State of Washington should pay for all elections related to state government and state offices.

We support local governance structures that allow flexibility among jurisdictions to meet requirements, such as open public meetings, in a way that reflects the organizational structure of the jurisdiction and does not interfere with public access.

Energy

We support continued state assistance for low-income consumers of energy and efforts to improve the state's voluntary green power program. We support the development of a long-term energy strategy that includes planning for adequate energy capacity and

supply. We support efforts and incentives to increase technological advances in distributed generation. We support state policy on distributed generation that removes barriers, while recognizing the unique requirements and circumstances of Washington's electric utilities.

Growth Management, Land Use and Annexation

We support the Growth Management Act (GMA) as the primary means of planning for growth. We support the further integration and streamlining of state land use and related statutes while preserving environmental protections. We support better integration of land use and transportation. We support minimum urban densities that take into consideration the circumstances of cities and address the regional need to meet longer-term growth.

We support efforts to protect and provide local government tools to implement “growth pays for growth” policies. We support state funding to assist jurisdictions in meeting the planning requirements and infrastructure needs of the Growth Management Act and the Shoreline Management Act. In addition, we support funding to help support the infrastructure and operating needs of cities annexing unincorporated areas.

Hazardous and Solid Waste

We support cleaning up hazardous waste sites through the maintenance of the Local Toxics Control Account, as well as additional state assistance to local governments for the handling, treatment, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials. We support the establishment of a tire-recycling fee for programs that properly dispose of tires. We support efforts to establish product stewardship programs for consumer electronic equipment.

We support development of common standards for recycled products, funding for recycling facilities and legislative initiatives to increase waste reduction and recycling. This includes efforts related to composting and supporting state and local government in finding adequate and stable markets for recyclable and recycled products.

Health Care

We support efforts to ensure that all persons, especially children, have accessible and affordable health care. We support efforts to maintain and enhance state funding (MVET replacement), and provide a robust and stable revenue source to deal with local public health requirements. We also believe all persons in Washington State should have access to affordable prescription drug coverage, as well as alcohol and substance abuse treatment, and comprehensive mental health services on demand.

Homeland Security

We support efforts to protect the public from terrorist threats, both foreign and domestic. We support legislation protecting information regarding emergency preparedness and critical infrastructure. We also support consistent laws and regulations regarding first responders that address the unique urban needs of homeland security. Finally, we support efforts to balance the need to effectively combat terrorism while protecting civil liberties and freedoms.

Housing

We support efforts to provide affordable and safe housing for all income levels, which includes direct funding and incentives for developing low- and moderate-income housing. Consistent with our regional homeless plan, we also support the development of discharge planning policies that assist people leaving institutions, including jails, prisons, hospitals, foster care, substance abuse programs and mental health facilities, to obtain stable housing.

Human Services

We strongly support maintaining and enhancing state funding for critical programs, and preserving the human services safety net to support our vulnerable populations and maintain healthy communities. These programs have a profound impact on the quality of life for thousands of vulnerable members of our community including seniors, people with disabilities, the mentally ill and chemically dependent, refugees, immigrants, and children of all ages. We support opportunities for self-sufficiency, poverty relief and upward mobility.

Key Arena

The City of Seattle's position will be developed following an open and transparent decision-making process.

Libraries

We support the current governance structure of libraries that provides for an independent library board. We also support open access to library materials and information on paper and in electronic form.

Parks

We support funding for the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program. We also support changes to the conservation futures statute to ensure that cities are receiving an appropriate share of the revenues. We also support maintaining current funding for priority environmental programs related to open space.

Public Safety

We strive to ensure that people, especially those who are most vulnerable, including the elderly, feel safe and protected in their homes, businesses and on our streets. We support efforts to hold offenders accountable while striving to relieve the demands on the adult and juvenile justice systems through prevention and early intervention programs and increased access to alcohol, substance, and mental health treatment. We support efforts to strengthen training standards for security guards. We also support measures to make it illegal statewide to possess auto theft tools. We also support additional tools, possibly including enhanced penalties such as suspended driving privileges, to help address the ongoing problem of repeat graffiti offenders.

Revenue

We strongly support maintaining and enhancing local taxing and fee authority and local revenue options. These tools provide necessary flexibility for municipalities in order to fulfill federal and state mandated responsibilities and to meet the needs of our communities. We are opposed to unfunded mandates. Seattle also supports

enactment of comprehensive reform of the Washington State tax system to provide revenue stability for cities and counties and a more progressive state tax structure.

Transportation

We support efforts to reduce the ongoing transportation problems throughout the city, region, and state, particularly when there is a safety risk involved. We support additional steps to provide local government with additional gas tax revenue, direct project funding, and competitive grants to meet their transportation infrastructure needs. We support efforts to maintain the effectiveness of HOV lanes and oppose measures that would degrade the passenger-carrying capacity of these lanes. We support program funding for Safe Routes to School, bicycle, pedestrian, and transit-friendly development investments.

Tribal Governments

We respect and support the unique sovereign status of tribes, understanding their treaty rights, the importance of their efforts to create a sufficient tax base, and their reliance on specific sources of revenue to operate programs for the benefit of their people.

Water Stewardship

We support the efficient use of water and environmental stewardship, including funding for salmon recovery. We support legislative efforts to address a variety of water issues, including in-stream flows, protection of municipal water rights, disputes about water rights, enhancement of water rights, and implementation of watershed planning. We support improvements in water quality through effective storm water management programs that set goals that are achievable and are not cost-prohibitive. We support maintaining current funding for priority environmental programs related to water quality.

In addition, we support the expansion of the State's Trust Water rights account and amending the trust water right statute to allow transfers of unperfected rights to the State Water Trust. We support limiting the amendment to transfers of unperfected rights that are dedicated for in-stream flows or other environmental benefits.